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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
November 6, 2001

SACRAMENTO MAN PLEADS GUILTY TO CHILD EXPLOITATION

SACRAMENTO--United States Attorney John K. Vincent announced today that Justin Michael Weinberger, 20, of Sacramento, pleaded guilty before United States District Judge Lawrence K. Karlton to four counts of child pornography. Count One charged that the defendant published an advertisement to exchange and distribute sexually explicit visual depictions of minors. Counts Two and Three charged that the defendant transported visual depictions of minors engaging in sexually explicit conduct. Count Four charged the defendant with possession of materials containing images of minors engaged in sexually explicit conduct.

According to Assistant United States Attorney Laura L. Swartz, who is prosecuting the case with Assistant United States Attorney Michael Malecek, Weinberger admitted that on July 7, 2000, in the Eastern District of California, he was operating an f-serve, or automatic image trader. The defendant's f-serve provided internet users access to images of minors engaged in sexually explicit conduct which had been saved on the defendant's computer hard drive. The defendant published an advertisement in an America On Line chatroom that read, in part: "Have action of preteen. I have what you want. Hardcore. Close-up. Series. Whatever. . . . This is a high quality, well-sorted extremely fast f-serve." The defendant published this advertisement seeking to trade images of minors engaged in sexually explicit conduct.

On that same day, July 7, 2000, an undercover sheriff's deputy in Florida responded to

the defendant's f-serve advertisement. In two separate sessions with the defendant's f-serve a total of eight images of minors engaged in sexually explicit conduct were sent from the defendant's computer in Sacramento to the undercover officer's computer in Florida. The defendant knowingly transported these visual depictions via his computer. The production of these images involved the use of minors, females under the age of 14, engaged in sexually explicit conduct and were of such conduct.

Weinberger also admitted that on November 6, 2000, in Sacramento, California, the defendant knowingly possessed a computer hard drive which he knew contained visual depictions of minors engaged in sexually explicit conduct. The defendant knew that the production of these depictions involved the use of minors engaged in sexually explicit conduct, such visual depictions were of such conduct, and were produced using materials which had been mailed, shipped, and transported in interstate commerce.

In addition to pleading guilty to Counts One through Four of the Indictment, the defendant also agreed to criminal forfeiture of the equipment he used to commit the crime, including his computer, keyboard, monitor, mouse, and DSL hookup.

Weinberger faces a total of 55 years in prison. He is scheduled to be sentenced January 15, 2002, at 9:00 a.m. The defendant is also being prosecuted by the state for the murder of Courtney Sconce.

This case is the product of a joint investigation by the Federal Bureau of Investigation and El Dorado County Sheriff's Department.

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